(c) the occupation of the subject rooms in Samrat Hotel was with the prior approval of the Government.

Profit made by ITDC

1533. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the profit made by ITDC during 1996-97;

(b) the reasons for decrease in foreign exchange earnings during the period; and

(c) measures taken to boost foreign exchange earning by ITDC?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF TOURISM: (SHRI SRIKANTA KUMAR JENA):(a) During 1996-97 ITDC earned net profit before tax of Rs. 74.34 crores which is provisional subject to aduit.

(b) The decline in foreign exchange earnings of ITDC is attributed mainly to decrease in foreign guest nights stayed in ITDC hotels which was largely due to adverse publiciy in media/press of the outbreak of dengue in Delhi.

(c) The steps taken/being to increase foreign exchange earnings *inter-alia* include:

— Participation in International Travel Marts.

— Hosting of Familiarization Tours of travel agents/writers etc.

— Extending brochure support to foreign tour operators.

—Featuring on the Amadeous Computerised Reservation System.

— Indroduction of Home paging facility on the Internet.

—Holding food festivals.

Increase in wage bill of ITDC

1534. SHRI GAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of increase in wage bill of ITDC due to wage revisions, recruitments, promotions, transfers and other non-plan expenditure during the past three years;

(b) what is the percentage of wage bill to total turnover;

(c) whether there is any proposal to introduce voluntary retirement scheme to reduce the wage bill of ITDC; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF TOURISM: (SHRI SRIKANTA KUMAR JENA): (a) The total wage bill which was Rs. 61.46 crores for the year 1994-95 increased to Rs. 78.50 crores (provisional) for the year 1996-97 representing an increase of 27.7%.

(b) The percentage of wage bill to turnover for the year 1994-95 was 26.05% which has gone down to 24.96% (provisional) for the year 1996-97.

(c) and (d) Presently no such proposal is under consideration of ITDC menagement.

Steps to restore popularity of Jammu and Kashmir Tourism

1535. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken to restore popularity of Jammu and Kashmir tourism including the Ladakh region; and

(b) the investement proposed for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF TOURISM: (SHRI SRIKANTA KUMAR JENA): (a) and (b) the steps taken by the Central Government to revive tourism in Jammu and Kashmir including Ladakh region, are:

(1) relief to tourism related private units on unpaid loans;

(2) interest subsidy for 10 years on further loans;